DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 778 IR 052 848

TITLE Scholarly Resources in Art History. Issues in Preservation. Report of the Seminar (Wayzata, Minnesota, September 29-October 1, 1988).

INSTITUTION Commission on Preservation and Access, Washington, DC.

PUB DATE 89

NOTE 48p.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.

DESCRIPTORS Annotated Bibliographies; *Art History; Illustrations; *Photographs; *Preservation; *Resource Materials; Seminars; Use Studies

IDENTIFIERS *Illustrated Texts

ABSTRACT

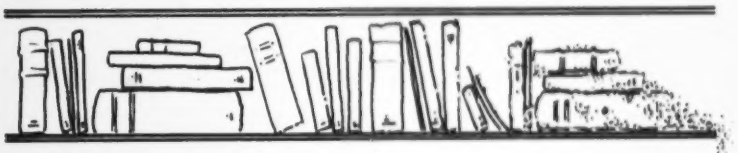
This report of the Commission on Preservation and Access Seminar on Scholarly Resources in Art History provides a brief overview of the major concerns and assumptions of the seminar. Seminar discussions are then summarized in the following areas: (1) brittle books, including the deterioration of valuable research tools and primary sources and the use of new technologies to enhance access to traditional formats; (2) photo archives, including present and potential problems and the need for a program to assess the condition of photo archive collections; (3) technology, including research in the areas of electronic imaging, photographic technology, and computer networking of visual resources; and (4) recommendations, including the formation of a task force and short- and long-term strategies. A paper entitled "Art Historians and Their Use of Illustrated Texts" (Deirdre C. Stam) is then presented, which reviews and analyzes use patterns of text-cum-image as reported by art history scholars to arrive at hypotheses about how and why scholars use this form of material, and what properties of this genre are essential to them. Summaries of 13 "Art Bulletin" articles on the state of research in various art historical subfields are appended as well as an agenda of the seminar and a list of participants. (14 references) (MES)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED310778

# Scholarly Resources In Art History

## Issues in Preservation



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Maxine Sitts

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Report of the Seminar
Spring Hill, Wayzata, Minnesota
September 29 – October 1, 1988

Commission on Preservation and Access
Washington, D.C.
1989

IRO53 S45

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Scholarly Resources In Art History

## Issues in Preservation

◆◆◆◆

Report of the Seminar
Spring Hill, Wayzata, Minnesota
September 29 – October 1, 1988

Commission on Preservation and Access
Washington, D.C.
1989

The paper used in the text of this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Commission on Preservation and Access
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Process Data

Scholarly resources in art history: issues in preservation: report of the seminar, Spring Hill, Wayzata, Minnesota, September 29-October 1, 1988.
p. cm.
Bibliography: p.
1. Art—Documentation—Conservation and restoration—Congresses.
2. Art—Historiography—Congresses. I. Commission on Preservation and Access.
N385.S36 1989 89-960
707'.2—dc19 CIP

# Contents

Members of the Commission on Preservation and Access.....v

Report of the Seminar .....1

Art Historians and Their Use of Illustrated Texts.....9

Appendix 1: Seminar Agenda.....41

Appendix 2: Seminar Participants ..... 43

## Members of the Commission on Preservation and Access January 1989

Millicent Abell
Yale University

Herbert Bailey, Jr.
Princeton University Press (retired)

Patricia Battin
Commission on Preservation and Access

Richard De Gennaro
New York Public Library

Billy Frye
Emory University

James Govan
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Vartan Gregorian
New York Public Library

Kenneth Gros Louis
Indiana University

Warren Haas
Council on Library Resources

Carole Huxley
New York State Education Department

Sidney Verba
Harvard University

William Welsh
Library of Congress (retired)

# Report of the Seminar on Scholarly Resources in Art History Issues in Preservation

*Patricia Battin*

The Commission on Preservation and Access convened a seminar on the preservation of scholarly resources for art history at Spring Hill, Minnesota, September 29 - October 1, 1988. The meeting, sponsored by the Getty Grant Program, was co-chaired by Patricia Battin, President, Commission on Preservation and Access, and John W. Haeger, Vice President for Programs and Planning, The Research Libraries Group. The list of participants and the agenda are included as appendices to this report.

The seminar was convened to consider, within the new national preservation program, the particular status of art history collections, the specialized requirements of art historians because of their dependence upon images, and strategies for productive participation in a massive, federally supported reformatting program. The major focus of this seminar was the preservation of the intellectual content rather than the conservation of the individual artifact.

During the introductory session, the following points were made. We are facing an unprecedented loss of valuable research material because of deteriorating acid paper. Scholarly methods could change rapidly because of the availability of new technologies to scholars. These same technologies are also revolutionizing the publishing process as well as the format of the product. The combination of the publication explosion, the dramatic increases in the use of technology, and the growing inability of universities and museums to provide financial support for traditional library resources requires new creative strategies for the preservation of the traditional tools for research in art history. The preservation challenge presents complexities in three areas: intellectual, economic, and technical. There may well be no completely adequate solutions, in which case we can only expect continuing deterioration of our collections accompanied by serious decline in the quality of research. The participants were challenged to consider the existing conditions, review alternatives, and recommend an agenda, with clearly established priorities, for both short-term and long-term strategies designed to insure the survival of resources important to art history research.

The discussions were focused around three major concerns: 1) the intellectual requirements of art-historical scholarship; 2) a selective review of existing technologies; and 3) the development of a series of recommendations for action. It became clear early in the discussions that, while both are required for research and instruction, the problems of **brittle books** and **photo archives** are distinctively different, require separate strategies, and possibly occupy a different order in the short-term priorities. It was emphasized that it is a confusion of the objectives of the seminar to discuss the conservation of original sources. The primary focus of the seminar was on the deteriorating condition of the printed research and bibliographic tools needed by art historians.

The discussions proceeded on the basis of three unanimously accepted assumptions: **1) scholarship in art history is dependent upon**

**images; 2) the current preservation process of high-contrast black-and-white microfilm is not satisfactory for the reproduction of half-tone and continuous-tone images; and 3) the preservation process must result in enhanced access to the scholarly resources.**

## I. Brittle Books

The importance of illustrated books and journals to art historians was emphatically underscored by the participants, who agreed on the following requirements for the discipline. Valuable research tools and primary sources across the discipline are crumbling and becoming impossible to use. Art historians use publications to demonstrate their intellectual arguments through illustration and explication. The basic historical argument consists of manifestation, documentation, and justification. The presence of the visual surrogate is essential to the presentation of the argument. The image is the means of transporting the argument to the reader. Therefore, the integrity of the image and the text must be preserved. The image may well be substandard, in comparison to modern techniques and standards, but the preservation of the **image in its original state** is an essential component of the history of ideas. The art historian needs the record of photographs used by his/her predecessors as a vital element of intellectual history. Technology can be used to increase access and use, but the fidelity of the preserved image to the original surrogate is essential to insure the intellectual integrity of the work.

A further complexity noted was that in some instances, illustrations in books may be the only ones in existence, thereby representing the "source document," whereas in other cases, the illustrations are duplicates of photographs found in the major photo archives.

In developing selection strategies, care should be taken to distinguish the purposes of different publications in order to establish priorities and to consider the use of new technologies to enhance access to traditional formats. For example, nineteenth-century journals represent a major form of scholarly communication in art history. Many survey publications and "corpora" have never been superseded. The thought was expressed that the latter publications could possibly be "reconfigured" in the reformatting process to permit broader access to their contents. Questions to be asked include the following: **What hasn't been superseded? What are the fundamental sources? In what circumstances is enhancement essential and/or useful? In what circumstances is enhancement destructive to the intellectual integrity of**

**the work? Are there identifiable periods of intense intellectual productivity represented in books and journals published during that time which should receive top priority for reformatting?**

Throughout the discussions, the importance of the scholarly art monograph to the discipline of art history was continually reaffirmed. However, publishing statistics which indicate a steadily rising price of publications with an accompanying decrease in unit sales appear to threaten the survival of an affordable illustrated monograph as the essential element in the scholarly communication process for art historians. This issue, although not explored at length at Spring Hill, requires more extensive analysis and consideration.

## II. Photo Archives

After a discussion of the present and potential problems of photo archives, it was agreed that the crisis in photo archives appears to be less urgent than that of brittle books, although this impression is difficult to confirm without more data. There is clearly a need for a more detailed assessment of the condition of photo archives before useful strategies and priorities can be determined. Problems exist both with the use of mounts and glues as well as the condition of the photographs, including fidelity, fading, and gradations of tone. In addition, indexing mechanisms for efficient access to individual photographs are underdeveloped so that the full potential of optical technology for improved access cannot be realized at this time. Because of these obstacles as well as the projected costs of optical disk storage and access, a major European archive has elected color microfilm and fiche as the storage format. A considerable amount of work has been done with an independent vendor to develop processes for the successful conversion of images from glass plates to microfilm and fiche.

A note of caution was sounded here, as in discussions throughout the meeting, about the potential of the new digitizing technologies to **enhance** the older images. Since visual resources provide a valuable record of historical change, routinely applied technical enhancements could unwittingly destroy an essential historical context. The capability for enhancement should remain in the hands of the end user through manipulation at the workstation.

The group expressed strong support for an assessment of the conditions of photo archive collections, the scope of the required remedial activities, the need for improved systems of access to visual resources, and cost projections as a necessary preliminary step in carrying out a

major conservation project. It was agreed that such a program should be predicated on the principle of conserving the source object—the negative—rather than photographic prints, wherever possible.

In addition to the problems of photo archives, print collections documenting the history of art and architecture require attention as well.

### III. Technology

The presentations included discussions of research and experimentation in the areas of electronic imaging, photographic technology, both black-and-white and color, and computer networking of visual resources. There was general agreement that the new technologies promise a wide variety of prospective opportunities, including enhancement of imagery, the ability to discern details not visible in the original slides or paintings, the manipulation of the orientation of the image, a heightened capacity to focus on details, and dramatically increased access to large collections of images. Issues involving costs, both conversion and operational, image quality, and archival potential still need resolution.

In imaging, although the electronic signal can be infinitely regenerated, the archival properties of various types of optical disks have not been definitively established. Both are important. Recent developments in color film now make this technology a most promising candidate for the preservation of illustrated materials, both color and black-and-white. If questions concerning the dark stability of color film can be resolved—a research process estimated as requiring two to three years of work—the potential longevity of this medium is estimated to be 200-250 years at room temperature. Another avenue for research might be to enhance black-and-white film so that it could reproduce image and text without loss of resolution or tonal qualities.

There was discussion of the difference between "perceptible" loss of image quality as opposed to objective loss and the significance of this issue to the quality of scholarship. An important priority is to find a way to provide art historians with the new technologies so they can both shape the applications consistent with their work patterns and develop as well new research methodologies based on the capabilities of imaging technology. Engineering prototypes of electronic image storage and retrieval workstations exist. The challenge is to develop the software for expanded access to and manipulation of stored

images in ways that enhance learning, analysis, and synthesis of ideas. Technology is changing the canons in the field, particularly in regard to the use of surrogates. If the surrogate is more vibrant than the object, how will that affect the development and assessment of aesthetic judgment?

## IV. Recommendations

1. **Appoint a Joint Task Force to develop basic premises, priorities, and overall strategies for a long-range preservation effort, including selection criteria and consideration of use of different formats. The membership should include but not be restricted to representatives of the following organizations:**
    - **ARLIS/NA**
    - **American Association of Museums**
    - **American Institute of Architects**
    - **Archaeological Institute of America**
    - **College Art Association**
    - **Research Libraries Group Art and Architecture Program Committee**
    - **Society of Architectural Historians**
2. **Short-term strategies:**
    - **Concentrate on filming those publications amenable to high-contrast black-and-white photography (e.g., materials illustrated with line drawings) for two or three years while research on continuous-tone black-and-white and color microfilm is carried out**
    - **Investigate state-of-the-art color microfilm technology, especially in Europe**
    - **Import European filming technology for a demonstration project at the Mid-Atlantic Preservation Service**
    - **Encourage improvement of microform reader and printer equipment**
    - **Identify the requirements for digitizing color film**
    - **Develop the requirements for the art historian's workstation in coordination with emerging digital technologies and their potential applications for art-historical scholarship**

- Expand and coordinate education efforts among all the image-dependent disciplines, librarians, technology experts, funding agencies, government bodies, the corporate sector, and the citizenry

3. Long-term strategies:
   - Define and execute research necessary to assess environmental hazards for a variety of storage formats
   - Define and execute research for dark stability of color microfilm
   - Develop and test prototypes of the art historian's workstation
   - Encourage and promote the development of indexing standards for the classification of visual images
   - Promote the use of permanent paper for prospective publications

# Art Historians and Their Use of Illustrated Texts

*Deirdre C. Stam*

## Purpose

This review of art historians and their use of illustrated texts is part of a broad inquiry being undertaken by the Commission on Preservation and Access to "foster, develop, and support systematic and purposeful collaboration among all libraries and allied organizations to insure the preservation of the human record in all formats and to provide enhanced access to scholarly information" (COMMISSION). In preparation for planning collaborative activities, the Commission is examining the use of scholarly resources by discipline. This paper attempts to deal with this issue in the field of art history with particular emphasis on illustrated textual material.

For purposes of this inquiry, preservation should be understood to mean the retention of the **intellectual content** of scholarly materials. In this context, the term does not refer to the treating of the physical entities (e.g., books in codex form, photographs) in which information is currently stored. It is assumed here that some aspects of intellectual content can be abstracted from their present physical forms and transferred to other, more permanent media. The nature of those media is not at issue here. The inquiry focuses on the intellectual content of art historical resources, particularly those which differ significantly from other library materials, specifically, illustrated texts.

In terms of preservation issues, the salient characteristic of art historical resources is the prevalence of reproductions. Although the preservation of images is a useful undertaking in itself, it is not nearly so interesting to the library community as the preservation of those materials—likely to be in their collections—in which reproductions and text appear together. The challenge is greatest where image and text are conceptually as well as physically united. For purposes of this discussion, this phenomenon will be called the text-cum-image format. The following discussion will focus on the intellectual aspects of this union of text and image, rather than upon the present-day physical characteristics of text-cum-image publications.

In order to explore the "intellectual" properties of unified text and image in this field, this paper will review the use patterns of text-cum-image as reported by scholars in the field of art history. These patterns will be analyzed to arrive at some hypotheses about how and why scholars use this form of material and what properties of this genre are essential to them.

**Scope**

The disciplines covered in this inquiry are art and architectural history, both subsumed under the term art history. The materials considered are published sources in which text and image are inextricably bound on a conceptual level. The term "published" as used here refers to material which is distributed publicly in a constant form. Published material thus refers not only to the traditional formats of books and journals, but also to publicly available microform and electronic formats.

Important to art history among the illustrated "book" or codex formats are monographs, museum catalogues, catalogues raisonnés, exhibition catalogues, and corpora. Other resources considered here

will be databases of national artistic patrimony, original publications (not reprints) in microform, videodisk publications, and hybrid publications (e.g., printed text and microform illustrations, electronic text and videodisk, electronic text and microform).

Excluded from this description will be image banks of slides or photographs, and archival material, although it is recognized that these kinds of resources make up the meat-and-potatoes of art historical research. These materials are inappropriate here in that they are often unique (i.e., not published) materials, they represent the separation of text and image, and they have intellectual and physical properties which are significantly different from the text-cum-image variety. Their preservation needs would require a separate analysis.

**The Relationship of Elements in the Text-Cum-Image Format**

In resources generally recognized as art historical in nature, it often happens that text and accompanying images are an integral part of the conception of the work. In these cases, either element, text or set of images, would be robbed of most of its meaning if separated from the other element.

The nature of the relationship between text and images in these cases is by no means consistent in all examples. Some kinds of relationships that can exist among these elements are indicated in the following list. In this catalogue, the concepts of the text, the image (reproduction), and the art object depicted are differentiated.

- The text can describe the object represented in the image (e.g., thereby functioning as a catalogue entry).
- The text can discuss a detail of the object represented in the image.
- The text can discuss the nature of the image as reproduction of the object depicted (e.g., as in discussions of photographs of sculpture).
- A textual assertion can be illustrated by an image as exemplar representing a class of objects.
- The text can be "restated" in another form by the image (e.g., as in the use of maps and diagrams).
- The text can "explain" the object depicted in the image by referring to external or supplementary evidence (e.g., by discussing provenance, previous condition, intended setting).

- The text can strive to suggest through rhetorical and poetical devices the "spiritual" qualities or effect of the object depicted in the image.
- A textual assertion about "effect" (e.g., gloomy, shimmering) of the object depicted can be reinforced by the qualities of the reproducing image.
- A deliberately understated textual reference can be underscored by a startling image.
- A textual reference to an abstract concept can be "concretized" by an image of an art object.
- The text can be "humanized" with images depicting the objects discussed when the setting of the objects (landscape, interiors) is indicated.
- The text can restate legibly the content of a written document (e.g., an inscription) that is depicted in an image.
- The text can make explicit intended elements of comparison between objects depicted in images.
- The text can explain an enigmatic image (e.g., an X ray) of a familiar work of art.
- The text can explain the scale of the object depicted in an image.
- The text can be amplified by the large number of elements that can be indicated in an image of a work of art (e.g., texture, condition, color).
- The style of design of text and image can relate to the topic under discussion (e.g., a Kelmscott treatment of a book on William Morris).

Some of these functions are more important to art historical research than others, and some lend themselves to transferral to media other than that of the original. Should the Commission consider such an approach to preservation, they would do well to consider the suitability of these various categories of text-cum-image for transference. The wisdom of such transference must be dictated not only by the inherent qualities of the type, but also by the projected utility of such transference to the discipline of art history. This latter question requires an investigation into the kind of scholarly inquiry which exists in the field of art history. How do art historians use the text-cum-image formats?

## Evidence

Evidence concerning art historians' use of illustrated sources—indeed, any sources—is scant. Statistical data are virtually nil (OBJECT; STAM, a, b). In rare instances, an art historian has mentioned his or her use of libraries in autobiographical passages (PANOFSKY), but detailed descriptions of working methods in these accounts are very few. It is only recently, perhaps as a reflection of a new self-conscious approach to the discipline, that art historians are speaking for publication about their working habits. This study relies heavily upon the recent publication sponsored by the J. Paul Getty Trust, *Object, Image, Inquiry: The Art Historian at Work*, which includes extensive anecdotal commentary on the use of sources, text-cum-image among them. It relies as well on the recent series in the *Art Bulletin* on the state of art historical research in a variety of subfields. And finally, it draws from an essay by Richard Brilliant in the Fall 1988 issue of *Library Trends*; the issue addresses "Linking Art Objects and Art Information" (STAM AND GIRAL).

This emphasis upon personal testimony comes not only from the paucity of other kinds of evidence, but also from a commonly held view that work in the humanities, and in art history in particular, represents personal syntheses of data and unique interpretation of evidence. This point of view was articulated recently by John Pope-Hennessey for *The New York Times* (quoted in RIDGWAY):

> One of the things about art history that I found puzzling from the first was that clever art historians (there were stupid ones, too, of course, but a lot of them were really clever) should reach diametrically opposite conclusions on the basis of a tiny nucleus of evidence. The reason, so far as one could judge, was that the subjective element in art history was disproportionately large. If this were so, it was not only works of art that needed to be looked at in the original but art historians too, since their results were a projection of their personalities.

## How Art Historians Work

In order to support its planning effort, the Commission would, no doubt, like to have a succinct definition of art history, and further, to have a clear description of just how art historians use illustrated textual material. Alas, there exists little consensus on the former and little objective data on the latter. These questions will be approached only indirectly in summaries of art historians' statements about their

field and about their work. Comments about text-cum-image have been culled from essays designed to address larger issues. In order not to distort totally the context of these rare comments, some of the surrounding discussion is summarized as well.

Only art historians are considered in this inquiry, though it is becoming generally recognized that scholars in other disciplines are beginning to use pictorial material heavily (ROBERTS). Apart from the obvious observation that users from other disciplines desire extensive subject indexing, little is known about their needs and working habits. This topic is too large to address here, but it is one which ought not to be neglected in planning for the preservation of text-cum-image formats.

For a general description of how the generic art historian regards and uses text-cum-image, Richard Brilliant's essay on "How an Art Historian Connects Art Objects and Information" provides many insights (STAM AND GIRAL). It should be remembered, however, that Brilliant discusses much more than this topic, and his remarks on the importance of this format should not be overinterpreted. The paragraphs that follow are a combination of quotation and paraphrase from Brilliant's essay.

> The hypothetical, normative art historian, posited in the title of this essay, relies on memory, intuition or judgment, and luck to establish a **context** for any work or object of art . . . . Only then can it become worthy of those efforts of interpretation and analysis that constitute the discipline of art history and shape its scholarly goals. (P. 120)

Art historians begin their study of an object with "some form of 'It looks like . . .' and then seek to find the other objects and images which complement the proposed resemblance" (p. 122). They must rely upon museum objects, archives of images, and illustrated publications. Notes Brilliant, the value of the "familiar staples" of reference libraries is

> seriously compromised when such publications rely heavily on verbal descriptions of the artworks and contain few or no pictures. Expense or the alleged distortions of reproductions may once have been legitimate excuses for such omission, but they are no longer acceptable, given the new modes of image-making brought about by modern technology. (P. 122)

And further,

> [n]ot every art history library can afford [the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*], nor many other well-illustrated reference works. Yet for art-historical research which concentrates on the art object itself, ready access to large numbers of images is essential to the successful investigation of matters of style, composition, motif, iconography, connoisseurship, the constitution of an artist's oeuvre, the definition of figural repertories, etc. Thus, without such images in abundance the act of comparison, the methodological basis of the discipline of art history, cannot come into full play and the research facility fails to serve its users. (P. 123)

This need for illustrated material, according to Brilliant, has been met recently by catalogues of block-buster exhibits, which are usually well illustrated by facsimiles of notebooks and the like, and by published photographic archives. A problem is the difficulty of obtaining permission to copy these images. In describing the inability to have images from the Getty Center reproduced due to copyright restrictions, Brilliant notes that "there is something anachronistic, even disfunctional about this limitation of [the Getty Center's] power" (p. 124). He mentions the newly developing use of computer-aided design to reveal the three-dimensional aspects of works of art through rotational displays.

Books and journals that contain illustrated material are just as important, and access to these materials through databases is insufficient.

"The association of art object and published reference, a commonplace of the catalogue entry, could be gainfully explored with new technology" (p. 128), Brilliant speculates. Useful access "also depends on the permeability of the classes of information so that when separate rubrics in the database impinge on one another the likelihood of productive access can be enhanced" (p. 128).

Indexing systems must "have sufficient built-in flexibility to respond to significant innovations in the discipline. The decoding and interpretation of art objects and their comprehension within a historical context of creation and reception are not governed by fixed laws" (p. 128).

A passing reference by Brilliant to his working method has serious implications for random retrieval of text-cum-image. Before reading an article which he locates through a citation, Brilliant glances at the other articles in the issue in order to discover something about the

context of the article and the point of view of editor and publisher. This information is important, he implies, for his evaluation of the evidence (p. 126).

### Art-Historical Approaches

Brilliant suggests that "interpretation and analysis" (p. 121) are the general goals of the discipline. But how, planners will ask, are these goals achieved? Traditionally, art historians have employed one or more of these approaches: formal analysis, connoisseurship, iconographical analysis, criticism, and societal and contextual study. The last of these has come into particular prominence in recent years in the form of semiotics, structuralism, and deconstruction. The authors of *Object, Image, Inquiry* have bravely attempted to define some of these methods:

> Formal analysis . . . limits itself to the work of art but emphasizes visual analysis and verbal description. (P. 133)
>
> [Connoisseurship involves] "making qualitative judgments based purely upon aesthetic significance, not being involved with extras. . . ." (Quote from an interviewee, p. 122)
>
> Much iconographic study centers on the matching of images to texts—literary, theological, or historical—that explain the literal or symbolic meaning of the image. (P. 143)
>
> [Concerning cultural and social history:] To understand the meaning of works of art . . . it is essential to look beyond factors intrinsic to their visual form and to interpret them in relation to the cultural factors that shape art and are in turn shaped by art . . . including religion, society, politics, economics, and a range of activities from spiritual, intellectual, and artistic thought to the production of material artifacts. . . . (P. 151)

Definitions of art criticism tend to consist of special pleading for one approach or another. Antonia Phillips, in reviewing David Carrier's *Art Writing* (Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 1988), discusses these difficulties and characterizes Carrier's argument thus (PHILLIPS):

> Critics think about past art when considering new art, and seek to make comparisons and connections; like art historians they are trained with reference to past art, and draw on whatever consensus and information exists about it. . . . When a critic dominates the art scene . . . Carrier thinks it is plausible to regard him as an expert—whose "good eye," taste and overall theory enable him to identify artistic excellence—because his success gives him

> the influence which generates a consensus. . . . But at present no art critic has achieved pre-eminence, there is no authority to generate consensus; so it would seem that the critic's role in the system of art manufacturing and distribution must have undergone change. The critic is no longer to be regarded as an expert, but as a publicist in the art market.

While it is possible to find combinations of these approaches in the work of one art historian, and in any single subfield, there tends to be a clustering of certain kinds of methodology in relation to different bodies of material. Some patterns in the distribution of methodologies can be discerned from the reviews of recent research in a variety of art-historical subfields that have appeared over the past two years in the *Art Bulletin*. The following section consists of excerpts from, paraphrases of, and comments on these reviews.

**Text-Cum-Image as Art-Historical Evidence in Recent Research**

In the current *Art Bulletin* series on the state of research, reviewers representing traditional subfields discuss issues and trends and describe or mention significant publications in their respective areas. It is not their purpose to discuss the nature of evidence, but some do so in passing. Those references to text-cum-image have been extracted and are described here with some indication of the context of the reference. To indicate context, this overview includes mention of the kinds of questions being asked by art historians and the kinds of evidence they are using, text-cum-image among them.

In truth, these reviews of the state of research include few references to illustrations of any kind. If the text-cum-image is truly the cornerstone of art-historical study, as some have imagined and Richard Brilliant suggests in the passage above, then why is there not significant discussion in these articles of this kind of evidence? The dearth is puzzling. One might surmise, in a dangerous kind of argument, that the form is so pervasive that it is assumed and therefore not necessary to mention. Or, alternatively, one might conclude that the authors of these articles did not intend to review the material mentioned, but rather to place it in the context of the field, and the quality of the text-cum-image in the publications discussed was therefore beyond the scope of their assignment. Whatever the explanation, the fact is that discussion of the phenomenon of text-cum-image in this series does not provide all of the insights one might hope to find there. What is found is presumably sound, given the authoritativeness of the reviews, and therefore worth considering here.

An article-by-article review appears in the Appendix. The detail is significant, and the reader is urged to peruse that section. A few main points from the *Art Bulletin* series are summarized here.

The most persistent theme is the crisis in the discipline that has resulted from art historians' questioning of the foundations and methods of their profession. The methods of inquiry leading to the crisis seem largely derived from recent literary theory and reflect the related movements of semiotics, structuralism, and deconstruction. The *Art Bulletin* articles suggest that the influence of these new critics is especially strong in scholarship pertaining to the Northern Renaissance, the seventeenth century in Italy, the eighteenth century, the twentieth century, architecture, and feminist art criticism. This impression may, of course, reflect the judgment of the writers, rather than the actual state of affairs in the subfield under discussion. Because the articles discuss the state of research, they naturally dwell upon recent trends and changes and tend to underplay the continued appearance of "old style" scholarship.

In addition to the theme of the crisis, other themes, related to one another and to the "crisis," are the expansion of the art-historical canon to include "lesser" works, and the redefinition of "evidence" to include data traditionally associated with sociology, economics, science, psychology, and other extra-humanistic areas of study. The consideration of new kinds of evidence goes hand-in-hand with the posing of new questions, although the causal relationship of evidence and question is not entirely understood.

While much space is given to new forms of art-historical inquiry and products in this series, all the reviewers mention the production of traditional forms of art historical output, beginning with the catalogue raisonne and the artist's monograph. The traditional exhibition catalogue is assuming new importance as it expands in size, increases and improves its reproductions, and includes essays as well as the expected object-by-object entries. Long-term, large-scale documentary efforts, such as illustrated corpora, are rare, but they are much valued where they do occur. The publishing of primary research material of any kind—archival, photographic, scientific—seems much appreciated. All of the standard forms include significant portions of text-cum-image.

The interest one finds in new aspects of familiar works of art requires that new access points be provided to known material. Iconographers in particular want indexing of individual objects/images by thing and theme depicted.

**Questioning Evidence, Sources, and Perception**

Again and again in the *Art Bulletin* articles, the reviewers refer to a "crisis" in their fields. This crisis has to do more often than not with the questioning of traditional approaches, of sources of evidence, and even of the validity of perception itself on the part of the viewer, the critic, and the art historian.

One could even see this inquiry on the part of the Commission as a reflection of this consciousness of sources and the perception of sources and the ramification of these ideas for the advancement of scholarship.

In art history, most of this questioning and the attendant discussion of perception fall under the rubric of social and contextual study and, more specifically, under the term "new art history." This approach, or more properly this set of approaches, which is grounded in literary theory, has had profound effect on art history in recent years and deserves more space therefore than it has gotten in the foregoing section. In order to explain the application of these borrowed ideas in the field of art history, this review includes a brief discussion of an article in the semiotic mode by Donald Preziosi. In it, Preziosi calls into question the legitimacy of all traditional approaches and methods of art history.

In an essay entitled "That Obscure Object of Desire: The Art of Art History," which discusses the Van Gogh film *Lust for Life*, Preziosi characterizes as "the instrumentalist metaphor" the traditional concerns of art historians for the primacy of the object and the organization of objects into classes through the application of a method (PREZIOSI). That method, called by Preziosi "panopticism," is common to many disciplines developed since the Enlightenment. It assumes a position of detachment and observation in relation to the thing observed and is similar, in Preziosi's language derived in turn from Jeremy Bentham, to an ideal prison or "institute for surveillance" (p. 15). Just as this model removes the observer from the things observed, it removes the objects from their social and historical contexts. Having effected this removal, art historians then try to put objects back into their contexts. They do so through a series of metaphors.

One of these metaphors is, according to Preziosi, an "obsessional formalism," which requires a "verbal paraphrase" of the visuality of the object in order to articulate its function as sign as, perhaps, testimony to genius, or indicator of some previous state. Another metaphor is "glottochronology," or the assumption of an intrinsic or internal aesthetic evolutionism, apart from historical context (p. 20). "Periodicization" is another metaphor for the belief that every cultural manifestation of a people was imbued with the spirit of a cultural system. Other metaphors-as-methods could be characterized by the phrases one sees in art-historical writing: **maker/artist as** inspired articulator of collective or class values . . . ; **processes of production as** labor, revelation, manufacture . . . ; **artwork as** product, process . . . ; **process of reception as** ritual . . . ; **user/viewer as** reader, consumer, critic, worshipper (p. 25).

The outcome of these interests, according to Preziosi, has been an emphasis upon the themes of "genesis, origins, continuity, resemblance, evolution, and periodicization" (p. 28). The discourse of the discipline is pervaded with themes of primitivism vs. sophistication, simplicity, and complexity; monumentality vs. ordinariness, uniqueness, and replication; and with the notions of invention, change, problem-solving, transformations, and the emergence of style. "In point of fact, art history has always been **a system of value pertaining to** the nature of history, sociality, production, consumption, exchange, perception, cognition, and origins" (p. 28).

As an indictment of this metaphorical approach to works of art, Preziosi concludes that

> [i]t involves no great leap of the imagination to see that the paradigm simultaneously serves as a validating device to privilege the role or function of the historian or critic as a legitimate and invested diviner of intentionality on behalf of lay beholders. The position is at the same time sacerdotal and secular, the historian or critic inevitably (wittingly or not) representing the interests of a certain class or group or collective in the rectification of readings (in "interpretation"). (P. 25)

Many of the views and much of the language of Preziosi are related to structuralist and post-structural writings in the field of literature. One cannot mention this approach without repeating the litany of its founders, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Roland Barthes. To borrow an explanation from Karen Winkler (WINKLER), post-structuralism has its roots in its opposite, structuralism, which emerged in mid-century from the work of Claude

Levi-Strauss and others; their work implied that language is a system of signs, and they argued that meaning is produced by

> systems of rules that operate very much like grammars. . . . Like structuralism, post-structuralism sees meaning as a construction, produced by arrangements of language of symbolic form. But unlike structuralism, it denies that the arrangement can ever be systematic or coherent. It is interested in oppositions, and the slippery way the distinctions that define words dissolve. Post-structuralists deny that the interpreter can ever be detached. They stress the function of the reader or listener—not in discovering meaning, but in producing it in the very act of reading or listening. . . . (P. A6, col. 4)

> . . . [T]exts are not to be interpreted so much as "deconstructed," their meaning revealed to be a linguistic construction that makes interpretation difficult. (P. A7, col. 2)

The implications of post-structural thinking for art history and for art-historical resources are profound. All authority is challenged or discounted, especially linguistic expression, and meaning is to be created anew from the act of perceiving. This view, sometimes accused of being ahistorical and rendering libraries unnecessary, could logically lead to an increased emphasis upon the representation of objects and analyses of the misinterpretations these prejudicial representations have encouraged. In fact, the effect of post-structural thought on art history, particularly strong in the area of modern art and film, has been to use words to talk about other words: criticism and historical writing. The use of reproductions is curiously underdeveloped in this manifestation.

It is significant, and characteristic of the new art historical genre, that Preziosi's book, *The Semiotics of the Built Environment: An Introduction to Architectonic Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1979), contains no photographs and a relatively small number of ground plans, views, and diagrams of abstract geometric concepts.

**Anecdotal Evidence on How Art Historians Use Text-Cum-Image**

Scattered through *Object, Image, Inquiry* are numerous references to using the text-cum-image format. Some comments are criticisms; others, the expression of desire for more or better text-cum-image publications. The comments are delivered randomly and cannot be thought to represent a balanced expression of needs in this discipline. Some comments, as might be expected, contradict other remarks. A few are repeated here. (Brackets appear in the printed text.)

- We rather discourage [students] from sitting around our libraries all the day. It is a bad sign if you see one of them there every day. It means they are looking at works of art [reproduced in books]; they are not out [looking at originals]. (P. 20)
- [I wish] these photographs [in two major corpuses of Northern Renaissance art] were . . . arranged . . . iconographically . . . or by a given artist . . . or within a given time frame. . . . We have such things, but not comprehensive. (P. 51)
- It would be very important for us to have not only name catalogues but also subject catalogues . . . [and], for example, to ask for information on Gothic art in Pisa and to get not only information concerning publications but also concerning . . . drawings, correspondence, and so on. (P. 53)
- Is there some way in which you can keep hold of the totality of your information without it all just stacking out in some mechanical, dead order, and having it be accessible to you so the writing can keep going, flowing? That is the problem which drives people to "Ah, to hell with the notes! I've got to write!" (P. 54)

From these and other remarks, most of which were delivered as asides in discussions of other topics, these conclusions have been drawn about art historians' attitudes toward text-cum-image formats:

1. The image comes first; the text is secondary (p. 60).

2. Physical proximity of text and image is essential. The technical requirements of pagination or the economies of printing plates can frustrate this need for adjacency.

3. The image must conform to the author's intention in the text. The usual requirement of "high quality" reproduction is here modified to call for "faithful" reproduction of what the author submitted with his text. The "industry" concept of "good" reproduction often distorts the relationship of text and image by "improving" upon the image submitted by the author through the use of oversaturated colors, over-inking for heightened contrast, "artistic" fuzziness, or inappropriate reduction/enlargement (p. 63).

4. Detailed indexing of images in texts is desirable. Information on the existence of the whole image is the first step; indications of the nature of the representation are also needed. Details on which view is represented, what date the reproduction represents, and which photographic (etc.) source was used would be helpful (p. 53, 147 f).

5. The lack of standardization in forms for citing works of art and reproductions—in addition to the problems arising from inadequate and irregular bibliographic citations—makes research in this text-cum-image format very difficult (p. 42).

6. Art historians' "wish lists" often include access to images and associated textual information representing museum collections. Book-form museum catalogues include only "high-spots." Full access to illustrated museum databases is wanted (p. 51).

7. The publication of more raw research material that includes both text and image is desired. The "publication" could be in new formats.

8. Many art historians lament their inability to organize their own photographs and textual material and to understand the organizational schema of other repositories and resources. Basic training in classification and vocabulary control and introduction to existing schema would be useful as part of art historians' professional training.

9. Art historians, by and large, do not have a good grasp of the major bibliographic tools of the discipline that could lead them to appropriate material.

10. Librarians who serve art historical researchers looking for illustrations in books rely largely upon their memories, intuition, and experience. Their knowledge of publishers' past practices guides them in their selection of illustrated texts to answer queries about images. The library catalogue is of little use for this kind of inquiry. Existing guides to images are woefully inadequate (STAM, c).

11. Art historians are impatient about the time they spend finding library materials. Even when seeking a known item, the time spent is considerable and resented. The need to have material quickly, particularly new material, seems to be more urgent than has generally been recognized by information providers. New formats that require more library time to consult than does the codex are unlikely to be well received by researchers (p. 39).

12. The comparison of images is often crucial and must be possible in new formats to serve the researchers well. Microfilm and even fiche are disliked on this account, and microform collections in art libraries get little use.

13. The ability to reproduce images from sources for later consultation is essential in this discipline. This need raises both technical and legal issues.

14. Given the fact of abysmal salaries in this field, access to automated tools such as a text-cum-image database would have to be subsidized in order to have widespread effect in the discipline (p. 83).

**Conclusions About the Role of the Text-Cum-Image Format in the Discipline of Art History**

This review of art historians' use of text-cum-image formats suggests some general "laws" about scholarly resources in this field and about text-cum-image in particular.

1. The boundaries of art historical literature are indistinct. Art historians use other literatures, and scholars in other disciplines, especially in recent years, use what has been traditionally considered art-historical literature. Both those strictly identified as art historians and those in allied disciplines produce work which is interdisciplinary in character.

2. Current work identified by art historians as belonging to their discipline is more verbal than visual, more theoretical than descriptive. Contextual studies are abundant.

3. Along with "new art history," traditional methods are used. Art historians often begin their research with an art object and then look for similar material. This pursuit involves, among other sources, images that are accompanied by identifying information in printed publications (one kind of text-cum-image format). Particularly useful for this work are the catalogue raisonné, the illustrated exhibition catalogue, corpora, and assemblages of images (e.g., sculptural programs, treasuries, hoards).

4. Text in art history is not comparable to text in literary studies. In the latter, printed text is often primary material. In art history, the object is primary material, the reproducing image is the basic secondary source, and text is ancillary to imagery. Even "new art history" begins, at least implicitly, with the object.

5. The reproducing image is only a barely acceptable surrogate for the object. Where the image brings its own personality to the text-cum-image format, it—the reproduction—is often the object of discussion. The sophisticated art historian can filter out of a reproduction the distortions associated with the reproductive technique.

6. Art historians are receptive to new kinds of imagery: X rays, photogrammetry, infrared photography, computer-generated rotational displays.

7. Most art historians want lots of images, rather than a few preselected images, in their resources. Reproductions of prints and drawings are desired.

8. Access to images within publications is wanted. Indexing of contents would be useful. Art historians look less often for a title (in the librarial sense of a "work" or statement) than they look for the images likely to be contained within a publication.

9. Manipulations of images would be useful. The ability to "download," compare, rearrange, and print would be helpful.

**Implications for Preservation Planning**

To move from a consideration of art historians' use of scholarly resources to recommendations for preservation planning is too large a step. Before laying specific plans, the Commission might consider these questions:

- *Can some categories of text-cum-image be readily isolated from all possible manifestations of this genre?*

  It might be useful at this point to reconsider the list of kinds of text-cum-image art historical sources presented on page 11 of this report. Other categories might be added to the list, and groupings suggested. For example: in Type A, the text would discuss the observable characteristics of the object depicted; in Type B, the text would discuss the historical/social context of the object; in Type C, the text would discuss the image as reproduction.

- *Are some categories more useful to art historians than others? Can one find general agreement about the basic nature of some categories?*

  Using examples of the Types specified immediately above, one might, in consultation with art historians, isolate the **essential** aspects of the type that must be preserved, the **desirable** aspects of the relationship of text and image, and the **inessential** aspects of their relationship. In Type A, for example—where the text discusses the depicted aspects of an art object—contiguity of text and image might be deemed essential, the preservation of the relative size of the image and text might be seen as desirable, and order of examples might be considered inessential. One could then match the requisite characteristics of the surrogate with available technology.

- *How should text and image be related in a surrogate to meet the needs of art historians? Like the printed page, as an immutable entity; like a database, with manipulation possible?*

  In order to understand better the needs of potential users, one might begin by reviewing the full set of tape recordings supporting the writing of *Object, Image, Inquiry*. The researcher might then conduct structured interviews with art historians and other users and analyze responses. From this information, one ought to be able to identify the essential kinds of scholarly information needed and the forms in which it would be considered acceptable. This paper has suggested that the catalogue raisonné, exhibition catalogue, corpus, and artist's monograph make up the foundations of the text-cum-image genre. This suggestion should be explored. All of these forms happen to be particularly suitable to a database treatment. This assertion, too, should be examined.

  Admittedly it is difficult to ask art historians how they might use a futuristic mode of communication. It might be more effective to approach the few existing examples of illustrated art-historical databases in a spirit of disciplined inquiry. Users' experiences could be analyzed, and the system criticized accordingly. Unfortunately, this kind of research is seldom undertaken by system staff themselves since they are put into the awkward position of having to justify their systems to potential funding agencies—to tout them, in effect—and criticism of those systems, even if conducted by internal staff, might be seen as jeopardizing future support.

  Funding bodies might be able to change this situation by encouraging, even requiring, research and evaluation in relation to the development of art-historical projects in new formats.

- *How can the original source be indicated? Can the context of the information be indicated? Can enough data be provided to allow the viewer/reader to make a determination about focus, bias, and authoritativeness of the text-cum-image contained in surrogate forms?*

  As for citation practices for works of art and reproducing images, one might study the conventions now in place, synthesize them, and work with existing professional organizations to promulgate these syntheses as standards. As for

context, database equivalents for the title page, preface, and table of contents must be developed for scholarly information in order to assign credit and responsibility and to enable the viewer to judge the authoritativeness of the source (STAM, d). It would be appropriate for the Commission on Preservation and Access to foster collaboration in this area for art-historical and other scholarly resources.

And finally, one must ask art historians whether this review of their use of text-cum-image has overlooked significant factors.

* * * * *

## Sources


BATTIN — Letter from Patricia Battin to Deirdre C. Stam, April 5, 1988.

COMMISSION — Executive summary of a grant proposal submitted by the Commission on Preservation and Access to the J. Paul Getty Trust, January 8, 1988, p. 1.

OBJECT — *Object, Image, Inquiry: The Art Historian at Work*. Elizabeth Bakewell, William O. Beeman, Carol McMichael Reese; Marilyn Schmitt, general ed. Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Art History Information Program, 1988.

PANOFSKY — Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 326-27. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955.

PHILLIPS — Antonia Phillips, "Generating a Consensus," *TLS* (May 27-June 2, 1988): 587.

PREZIOSI — Donald Preziosi, "That Obscure Object of Desire: The Art of Art History," *Boundary 2: A Journal of Postmodern Literature and Culture*, 13, no. 2 / 3 (Winter/Spring, 1985): 1-41.

RIDGWAY — Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, [letter in] *The Art Bulletin* 68, no. 3 (September, 1986): 482.

ROBERTS — Helene Roberts, "'Do You Have Any Pictures of . . . ?': Subject Access to Works of Art in Visual Collections and Book Reproductions," *Art Documentation* 7, no. 3 (Fall, 1988): 87-90.

STAM, a — Deirdre Corcoran Stam, "Information-Seeking Practices of Art Historians in Museums and Colleges in the United States, 1982-83." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1984.

STAM, b — Deirdre Corcoran Stam, "How Art Historians Look for Information," *Art Documentation* 3, no. 4 (Winter, 1984): 117-19.

STAM, c — Deirdre Corcoran Stam, "Remembrance of Things Past: Mental Processes of the Art Reference Librarian," *Art Documentation* 4, no. 4 (Winter, 1985): 139-41.

STAM, d — Deirdre Corcoran Stam, "An Opinion: Art History, 'l'Informatique,' and the Reward System," *Art Documentation* 5, no. 3 (Fall, 1986): 109-10.

STAM AND GIRAL — Deirdre C. Stam and Angela Giral, eds., "Linking Art Objects and Art Information," [entire issue of] *Library Trends* 37, no. 2 (Fall, 1988).

WINKLER — Karen J. Winkler, "Post-Structuralism: An Often-Abstruse French Import Profoundly Affects Research in the United States," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 34, no.13, (November 25, 1987): A6 f.

# Appendix

Summaries of recent *Art Bulletin* articles on the state of research in various art historical subfields:

**Ancient Art.** Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, "The State of Research on Ancient Art," 68, no. 1 (March, 1986): 7-23.

One of the most detailed discussions of illustrated sources comes from the pen (wordprocessor?) of archeologist Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway. In her discussion of "The Literature" she begins with mention of two superb volumes on the "Warriors" restoration technique and style as a supplement to the *Bollettino d'arte*. She mentions that volume I includes excellent photographs of technical details, photogrammetric "contour lines" of both warriors, charts of metallurgical analysis, and reconstruction of casting methods.

Other than this unusual publication, for sculpture the occasional monograph or article on a single master still appears. Iconography has come to the fore, especially with the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)*. Frank Brommer's excellent photographic documentation of the Parthenon sculptures has caused a flurry of publication. The use of life-sized models and other techniques of restoration allows for conjectural reconstruction of groups, bolstered by epigraphical and architectural evidence. Formal analyses of style are less frequent, though some work of this type is done to elicit "formulae" for objects of similar style and date. Photogrammetry and computer analysis have helped the understanding of kouroi and korai (p. 12). Most of the former is applied to Greek art. Roman art attracts sociological studies and studies of distribution patterns and quarry organization.

In architecture one sees emphasis on working methods and architectural practices or styles, as well as the tracing of a single building type. Usually structure, decoration, function, and ideological intent are considered together.

Aerial photography has revealed city planning evidence. Topographical studies, reconstruction, and plastic models are used. As for mosaics and painting, one sees both technical studies and iconography. "A structural approach . . . looks for core images as eternal symbols with universal application, and therefore tries to interpret Greek vases on almost anthropological grounds, with limited success" (p. 18).

The opening of the Beasley Archive with its computerized references is important for the study of ancient art.

Local exhibitions are useful, especially the symposia which produce ad-hoc catalogues, as are drawings from private collections, which prompt the publication of unpublished pieces. New comprehensive catalogues are emerging that are collaborative in nature. Symposia and Festschriften are still hard to track down. "Other recent publications by subjects or by periods, in use in paperback in many of our classrooms, need not be cited in this context, except to rejoice that so many outstanding photographs of ancient monuments . . . are now available to our students" (p. 21).

"In the United States, the pressure of the job market has affected art historians and archaeologists alike, and too many articles and books are being written simply to obtain a position or secure tenure—in other words, to heed the warning to 'publish or perish.' Perhaps as a corollary, the scholarly apparatus of such writings is often inadequate; even strong and sound contributions are at times marred by imperfect or incomplete references, jotted down carelessly and hastily and never double-checked. Liberties taken with foreign titles and names, not to mention opinions and quotations, are occasionally appalling, and an alert editor may have a heavy task, if conscientiously carried out" (p. 23).

**Medieval Art.** Herbert L. Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art," 70, no. 2 (June, 1988): 166-87.

As one might expect from an art historian of the medieval period, a time known for its attention to the visual realm, Herbert L. Kessler gives considerable attention to visual sources in his review of recent work in this subfield. He touches on the function of the image in the medieval period, constituting a visual exegesis, and explains the importance of visual culture and circumstances of production. The illuminated book, the forerunner of the text-cum-image format, was preeminent and enjoyed the central place in the cult of the book, a concern which involved all physical aspects of the book from cover to decorative initial letter (p. 169).

"The circumstantial (not artistic) unity of medieval art works and their functional (not stylistic) relationship with one another pose particular problems for modern presentation. In art-historical texts, pieces extracted from accretive and complex monuments are usually arranged in galleries of plates that do not differentiate them from the art of other periods" (p. 179).

"More successful are the publication and display of church treasuries, especially in the few cases where authentic hoards can still be assembled" (p. 179).

"Pictorial narrative in its primal manifestation—the illuminated book—was part of a complex interplay between text and image. Illustrations derived a special authority from association with their sacred writings, and they led the viewer/reader to conclusions that were persuasive precisely because they were integrated into the literal account." Pictorial topoi were employed to "rewrite" the accompanying texts (p. 185).

**Italian Renaissance.** William Hood, "Italian Renaissance Art," 69, no. 2 (June, 1987): 174-86.

In discussing Italian Renaissance art scholarship, William Hood describes a crisis: what constitutes art-historical evidence? (p. 175). This question is more significant, he contends, than the echoes of semiotics and deconstruction one finds in research in other periods. Monographs and catalogues raisonnés continue to appear. New studies with important visual components include documentation on the cleaning of works of art and studies of color in the Renaissance. Marilyn Lavin's computer program, which explores variables in monumental pictorial narratives, is of interest (p. 178).

**The Northern Renaissance.** Larry Silver, "Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era," 68, no. 4 (December, 1986): 518-35.

Silver, in discussing the state of research in northern European art of the Renaissance, sees the crisis in his branch of art history as a "predictable oscillation of scholarly concerns . . . combined with an inevitable reaction toward authority by a younger generation" (p. 518) resulting in a climate where linguistics and anthropology have come to serve as models for scholarly approaches. The emphasis is shifting from individual artists/creators to an investigation of "collective facts and circumstance" (p. 519). The reader/viewer is taken on a tour of alien sensibilities by the art historian Michael Baxandall, for example, in *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany.*

Silver advocates looking at the full range of artistic production rather than a traditional canon of fine examples.

The author supports the use of prints as objects of study; in this section Silver discusses the environment in which these works of art

were seen. Since not many architectural complexes remain, one must look at the "historical worlds" of the users, including religion. In this discussion, too, one is led from the object to the text.

Possibilities for illustration exist in the author's comment that "visual imagery as part of the new interests in descriptive science" (p. 531) is an important and neglected part of studies of the Renaissance. In general, though, he finds that studies in this area stress the fact that "culture is the interpretive nexus of hermeneutics and history" (p. 531). Archives play an important part in studies of life in northern cities, e.g., inventories. Also of interest are technical studies of material and techniques that will shed light on workshop practices.

**The Northern Renaissance Book.** Sandra Hindman, "The Illustrated Book: An Addendum to the State of Research in Northern European Art," 68, no. 4 (December, 1986): 536-42.

The illustrated book in northern European art would seem a fit subject for the text-cum-image format, but in fact little discussion of this kind of source material occurs in Sandra Hindman's review.

Beginning with a history of attitudes toward illustrated books and comments about its minor stature among the arts, Hindman describes a champion of the illustrated book, Delaissé, who approached the topic archaeologically, observing and analyzing all the material data concerning objects of the past and interpreting them. "Viewed in this way, the illustrations of a book are most meaningful only when they are analyzed with the other textual, historical, and material data that emerge from investigating the total book within its context" (p. 538). The reviewer seems to assume that the researcher has access to originals: calendars, prayers, books of hours, block-books. She ends with mention of two topics, the use of books and their methods of storage, neither of which lends itself very readily to representation.

**Seventeenth-Century Italian Painting.** Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey, "Italian Painting of the Seventeenth Century," 69, no. 4 (December, 1987): 494-509.

In describing recent work in 17th-century Italian painting, Cropper and Dempsey, describing the "anxiety about interpretation that has taken hold in art history," contend that the problem comes from "an inability to assimilate and make judgments about information contained in the sources, a willful disinclination to come to grips with the critical rhetoric and poetics that they embody as texts and describe in painting, the result being a dysfunction in criticism itself" (p. 494).

The most important single issue in this field is the "question of sources," by which is meant the attack on the material upon which modern interpretation is based. Much contemporary documentation is now dismissed as myth or rhetoric. Nonetheless, "the idea of history as the assemblage of 'hard facts' has returned to dominate, and the monograph with catalogue raisonné remains the preferred form of ambitious publication even after scholarship elsewhere has broadened to include other forms of inquiry. These catalogues, of Annibale Carracci . . . and many others (to which must be added the invaluable catalogues of prints and drawings that continue to stream from the press) are the life-blood of our field, and often surpass in thoroughness and sophistication the older monographs to which Renaissance scholars must still refer. . . . Without reliable catalogues . . . the history of painting in Bologna . . . will be deprived of reliable benchmarks for connoisseurship, as well as the illustrative and archival raw material expected in such publications today" (p. 504).

"In our young field, however, these riches have not been consulted for answers to new questions (and it is new questions that create new methods, not vice versa), and mostly serve in the cataloguing of yet more pictures and collections" (p. 504).

The authors note that Svetlana Alpers' work on ways of seeing in Dutch art have not inspired similar investigations about Italian ways of seeing in the 17th century. This would be a fruitful line of investigation, the authors imply, as well as the general topic of observation itself.

**Northern Baroque Art.** Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, "The State of Research in Northern Baroque Art," 69, no. 4 (December, 1987): 510-19.

Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann begins his essay with reference to controversy in his subfield. He observes that large-scale surveys are no longer common in this area. His only reference to imagery in such a work is that it is "well illustrated" (p. 511). Another, Svetlana Alpers' study of art as description, is more verbal than visual.

Studies of genres in painting include a work by Eric Luijter in which he "juxtaposes an analysis of the representations of mythological subjects in painting with an independent, autonomous analysis of the same subjects in literature, then asks where they overlap" (p. 512). Again, quality of reproduction is not a central concern.

Portraiture (a "growth industry") too is investigated in terms of its typology and literary parallels, rather than examined for pictorial qualities. Genre painting also is examined in light of contemporary literature.

Traditional concerns, such as "the reconstruction of authorship [for individual artists] and date, the analysis of the purposes of a work of art and their interrelationships, and iconographic investigations . . . are still indispensable" (p. 514). As for Rembrandt studies, which focus on defining the corpus, X rays and infra-red photographs have been useful in that they "expand the range of visual data to be judged" (p. 515). The author suggests that future volumes of this study "should include a greater body of visual material, like illustrations of details, macrophotographs, photographs made in raking light, etc." (p. 515).

Monographic work continues, as does the study of society and painting. Economic histories, for example, depend heavily upon archival documents. Even Rembrandt is being studied from the societal standpoint. Drawings and prints are receiving new attention.

Despite the novelties in approach, "[t]he methods of the art historian, developed for at least a century and [a] half, are all still valid. . . . Art history differs from literature, semiology, psychology, sociology, and history. The art historian can use other disciplines, and approaches developed in those other disciplines, but he must incorporate them into his own methods" (p. 519).

**The Eighteenth Century.** Barbara Stafford, "The Eighteenth Century: Towards an Interdisciplinary Model," 70, no. 1 (March, 1988): 6-24.

"No area of humanistic endeavor makes plainer than the study of the eighteenth century that the generic divisions among disciplines and the traditional institutional framework of specialized university departments are incongruent with the prismatic nature of current leading research. . . . The Enlightenment's perplexity remains ours. How does one construct a bridge—spanning disparate and fluid areas, each with its own languages, master queries, and traditions—by which noncompartmentalized interaction might fruitfully occur?" (p. 7).

Barbara Maria Stafford selects six rubrics for her review which tread "along the faultline between image and word" (p. 11). These issues are 1) the phenomenon of pluralistic collecting, syncretic encyclopedism, and the proliferation of taxonomies; 2) the disintegration of

the "Classical" canon; 3) the impact of a broadly defined print culture, including book illustration and other reproductive media; 4) the rise of the theatrical spectacle; 5) the sociology of art including the portrait of life in and outside of the studio; and 6) the marriage of art and science with an interest in "how-to" manuals and in vernacular architecture.

While these subjects are based on visual art, they are pursued primarily in the verbal mode, seeming to depend largely upon explanation rather than depiction. A passing reference to *trompe l'oeil* raises interesting questions of how one reproduces such work in light of the fact that it depends upon interplay of reality and illusion or reproduction. Another passing note refers to eighteenth-century illustrated books for cartouche designs and to architectural "advertisements" consisting of images of imaginary buildings (p. 17). The theatrical spectacle as a genre is, of course, difficult to represent in images.

**The Nineteenth Century.** Richard Shiff, "Art History and the Nineteenth Century: Realism and Resistance," 70, no. 1 (March, 1988): 25-48.

In discussing developments in writing on 19th-century art, Richard Shiff describes a dilemma in art history: does a well-chosen image capture the historical essence (synecdoche) or must one amass images in encyclopedic comprehensiveness? Schiff contrasts the totalizing, positivist document to the encyclopedic entity and observes that exhibition catalogues have taken on this character. They are too big to read and are sometimes the product of several scholars. They are to be consulted piecemeal. What is represented is a multiplicity of data and not the totalization or organization represented by the oeuvre catalogue (p. 33). He notes that the exhibition catalogue has become increasingly important as an outlet for scholarship (p. 33). These shows can be "blockbusters," exhibits of a small number of objects, the product of a single scholarly voice, or the exploration of a single theme.

**The Twentieth Century.** Donald Kuspit, "Conflicting Logics: Twentieth-Century Studies at the Crossroads," 69, no. 1 (March, 1987): 117-32.

While there is crisis everywhere in art history, according to Donald Kuspit, it is most acute in twentieth-century studies. "Facilely conceived, the conflict may look like the old one between *Geitesgeschichte* and positivistic ('informational') art history, revisited in revised form.

But the semiotic/deconstructive approach is not a disguised regression to *Geitesgeschichte*. It denies the uniqueness of art by dissolving its 'spirit' in intertextuality; it denies the lockstep unity of the march of history by emphasizing the ruptures in its ranks; and it denies that the work of art is self-evidently itself, whether conceived as evolving from other works of art or as an eternally—ahistorically—powerful presence. . . . The new conflict may mark the end of art history as a science in any rigorous sense—may mark the end of any clear sense of what a humanistic science is" (p. 119).

The subsequent discussion of theorists Norman Bryson, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Rosalind Krauss, and Peter Gay contains no references to illustrations or to illustrated works. A mention of a book on Matisse reveals that author is concerned primarily with facets of the artist's personal and emotional life.

**American Art.** Wanda Corn, "Coming of Age: Historical Scholarship in American Art," 70, no. 2 (June, 1988): 188-207.

American art scholarship, according to Corn, is very documentary in nature. "Given how very few people have worked in the field, there has been plenty to do just figuring out who did what when and discovering where paintings and sculptures reside" (p. 193). Because most employment in American art is in museums, notes Corn, most scholarship consists of museum catalogues, describing—"venerating" —artist and work. There is little of the diversity one sees in art history in the university setting.

Galleries are now sponsoring catalogues raisonnés.

Much scholarship is problem-oriented: why did Eakins do these subjects? The earlier essays historicizing a single work of art do not work, in Corn's opinion, because "works of art become illustrations of changes in social history, and the history, because it is told around pictures tends to be overly simplified and incomplete" (p. 201).

On the new trends in scholarship, such as post-structuralist studies, Corn comments, "The greatest success of this new interpretive criticism is the way in which it foregrounds the object, and dramatizes the act of looking, and questions the oddities of what one sees" (p. 202). She describes "this new passion for reading canvases as texts of hidden messages and especially for their recondite, psychological meanings" (p. 203) as the principle manifestation of new art criticism in this subfield. Images are being used, she explains, to find expressions of American values. In addition to works formally identified as

art, Americanists are using other manifestations of material culture as well, including toys and advertisements.

**Feminist Art History.** Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, "The Feminist Critique of Art History," 69, no. 3 (September, 1987): 326-57.

In a feminist critique of art historical scholarship, Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews note that feminist critics have moved from the first phase, "the condition and experience of being female," to a second stage, with an interest in the production and evaluation of art and the role of the artist (p. 326). Significant publications included the catalogue of a large exhibition organized by Nochlin and Harris in 1976. Documentation of the lives of women artists was expected to follow and has done so only to a small degree in surveys, compendia, and dictionaries. The emphasis lately has been less on evaluation and more on the historical and ideological position in relation to art, art production, and art ideology. One sees, too, the use of gender and psychoanalytic theory, and the "deconstruction" of the image of the female body as art subject (p. 329). Publications documenting and encouraging women's art are proliferating.

Recent questions on whether women perceive differently from men, and why, have begun to attract scholars. Questions focus on representation and gender difference, rather than on the notion of female sensibility (p. 335). Interdisciplinary work is characteristic among historians, writers, artists, critics, and art historians. A basic tool is the interview, given the absence of published documentation. Two trends in the methodology of recent feminist art criticism are toward information-seeking, and toward conceptual or idea-oriented investigations. None of this lends itself to illustration. The authors end their review with a call for monographs on women artists in order to know more about the "lives and works" of women artists.

**Architecture.** Marvin Trachtenberg, "Some Observations on Recent Architectural History," 70, no. 2 (June, 1988): 208-41.

Why, asks Trachtenberg, is architecture neglected in art historical writings, indeed, in society generally? Because it is not taught in elementary and secondary school and therefore has the reputation of being "hard" and extraneous.

As for resources, such as do exist, Trachtenberg cites some recent surveys built more on images—photographs and drawings—than upon text, though the labels and accompanying documentation are an important part of the publication. The drawings from the Royal Institute of British Architects are an example.

Trachtenberg's remarks about architectural "picture books" are ambivalent: "other writers have published books filled with such photographs [of vernacular architecture] without Rudofsky's painful moralizing, simply out of love for the pictorial qualities of their photogenic subject" (p. 230).

The reviewer mentions the existence of charts and formulae in architectural publications, citing the particularly extensive visual documentation of a book on Florence (Giovanni Fanelli's *Firenze, architettura e città*, 1976), including plans, drawings, reconstructions, and photographs (p. 233). Trachtenberg finds a book on Las Vegas with photocollages, diagrams, and maps visually stunning (p. 236).

In discussing semiotics and architecture, Trachtenberg introduces an issue with serious implications for the publication and retrieval of text-cum-image formats. He first quotes from Encipoglu:

> "The central aim of semiology is to study sign systems instituted by society within given contexts, in order to understand the culturally codified conventions on which the process of signification is based. Therefore, a semiotic framework has to situate architecture within a process of signification, revealing the coded nature of denotation and connotation which are based on cultural conventions, rather than consisting of transparent meanings dependent on psychological factors of perception." (P. 238)

And further, Trachtenberg comments, "It will be objected that no concept, methodology, or terminology with which we study art and architecture is identical with the work itself or the historical concreteness of the context; all are themselves culturally conditioned constructs that deal with an abstraction of the work of art" (p. 238).

The implications of Trachtenberg's observations are far-reaching for the text-cum-image format. If all conceptual frameworks which art history applied to art objects are artificial, culturally biased, and **transitory**, and if the language of these frameworks has a life of its own apart from the object, how then can language be used as a medium for describing images and then **retrieving** those images? Can text, given such assumptions, be considered an integral and reliable part of

the text-cum-image publication format? Can the image of an object itself have any relationship to the reality of the object, or is it entirely a figment of the collective imaginative picture of what the thing "should" look like? When we document a work by visual means, are we doing anything more than recording the perceptions of the documentalist? And will the resulting image have "meaning" for the perceiver which has any relationship to the thing depicted, or even to the documentalist's perception of it?

Trachtenberg observes that architectural writing is now done by art historians, architects, engineers, antiquarians, restorers, ecologists, social critics, feminists, semiologists, urban planners, museologists, travelers, etc. All of the interests represented by these writers are finding their way into architectural publications.

APPENDIX 1

# Scholarly Resources in Art History Issues in Preservation

## Agenda

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

| | |
|---|---|
| 3:00 p.m. | Arrival/Hospitality |
| 5:30 p.m. | Reception |
| 6:30 p.m. | Dinner |
| 8:00 - 9 p.m. | Introductory Session<br>• P. Battin<br>• J. Haeger |

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

| | |
|---|---|
| 7:30 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 8:30 - 10 a.m. | Intellectual issues associated with text and image<br>• Textual reproduction same for all disciplines<br>• What is the importance of the image?<br>• What is the purpose of the illustration?<br>• R. Brilliant<br>• L. Silver<br>• History of the development of the art book as a tool for research and instruction<br>• Quality of book illustrations in the 19th century<br>• "Architecture" of books about art<br>• W. McClung<br>• Role of the photo archive<br>• Organization<br>• Current state of automation<br>• Scope of coverage<br>• M. Möhler<br>• Quality of photography and deteriorated reproduction<br>• Distinction between conserving original and preserving intellectual content by alternative means |

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 10:20 - 12 noon | Continuing Discussion |
| 12:00 - 3 p.m. | Lunch and Recreational Break |
| 3:00 - 6 p.m. | Procedural, organizational, and technological alternatives<br>• Current problems with traditional formats<br>  • A. Giral<br>• Technological alternatives:<br>  • M. Ester<br>  • J. Reilly<br>  • B. Morgan<br>  • G. Thoma<br>• Photo archive as alternative to reproduction of illustration in book form<br>• Unbundling of book: the art book recast into new packages |
| 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. | Reception |
| 6:30 p.m. | Dinner |
| 8:00 - 10 p.m. | Demonstrations of relevant products/technologies |

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1

| | |
|---|---|
| 7:30 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 8:30 - 10 a.m. | Setting the Action and Research Agenda |
| 10:00 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 10:20 - 12 noon | Continuing Discussion |
| 12:15 p.m. | Closing Lunch |

APPENDIX 2

# Participants in Spring Hill Seminar

## September 29 - October 1, 1988

Nancy Allen
Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Patricia Battin
Commission on Preservation and Access

Richard Brilliant
Columbia University

David Brownlee
University of Pennsylvania

Michael Ester
The Getty Art History Information Program

Bernd Evers
Kunstbibliothek Berlin

Angela Giral
Columbia University

John Haeger
Research Libraries Group

Eugene Kleinbauer
Indiana University

William McClung
University of California Press, Berkeley

Annette Melville
Research Libraries Group

Martin Möhler
Hermann & Kraemer, Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Barbara Morgan
University of California, Berkeley

Alfreda Murck
Metropolitan Museum of Art

James Reilly
Image Permanence Institute

Larry Silver
Northwestern University

Deirdre Stam
Syracuse University

George Thoma
National Library of Medicine